

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

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R 301545Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8950

INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L OUAGADOUGOU 2741

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, ML, UV

SUBJ: BORDER DISPUTE BETWEEN MALI AND UPPER VOLTA

REF: LOME 2987

1. AT FIRST GLANCE, COMMUNIQUE ISSUED DEC. 27 AT CONCLUSION LOME MEETING APPEARS TO BE RATHER BAD DEAL FOR UPPER VOLTA AND IS BEING REGARDED AS SUCH IN OUAGADOUGOU. MERE FACT THAT PART OF UPPER VOLTA'S TERRITORY IS TO BE DEMILITARIZED, IF ONLY TEMPORARILY, IS VIEWED AS VICTORY FOR MALIAN SIDE AND RECOGNITION BY UPPER VOLTA THAT THERE MAY BE SOMETHING IN MALIAN CLAIM.

2. ON THE OTHER HAND, MOST VOLTANS READILY AGREE THAT UPPER VOLTA'S ARMED FORCES ARE NO MATCH FOR MALIAN ARMY AND THAT THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY AT PRESENT TO
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RECOVER LOST TERRITORY BY FORCE. BY AGREEING TO

CREATION OF MEDIATION COMMISSION, IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT LAMIZANA HAS GAINED TIME TO REINFORCE VOLTAN ARMY IN EVENT MEDIATION EFFORTS ARE UNSUCCESSFUL.

3. COMPOSITION OF MEDIATION COMMISSION IS GENERALLY REGARDED AS FAVORABLE TO UPPER VOLTA BECAUSE IT INCLUDES THREE STATES WHICH ARE REPORTED TO HAVE HAD SOME BORDER PROBLEMS WITH MALI IN THE PAST. FURTHERMORE, ALL VOLTANS ARE CONVINCED THAT AN OBJECTIVE STUDY OF "EXISTING LEGAL DOCUMENTS" WILL CONCLUDE WITHOUT DOUBT THAT TERRITORY IN QUESTION BELONGS TO UPPER VOLTA.

4. WHILE THERE IS GRUMBLING, THEREFORE, AMONG YOUNG MILITARY OFFICERS AND FORMER POLITICIANS AS A RESULT OF LOME COMMUNIQUE, MOST VOLTANS ARE LIKELY TO TAKE A WAIT AND SEE ATTITUDE IN EXPECTATION THAT MEDIATION COMMISSION WILL RULE IN FAVOR OF UPPER VOLTA AND, IF NOT, THAT PRESIDENT LAMIZANA WILL HAVE TAKEN URGENT STEPS TO STRENGTHEN VOLTAN ARMY.

5. ONE THING IS CERTAIN: THE DAYS WHEN LAMIZANA COULD REJECT OUT OF HAND DEMANDS FOR HIGHER MILITARY BUDGETS ARE OVER. VOLTANS ARE LIKELY TO INSIST HENCEFORTH THAT THEIR ARMED FORCES HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO DEFEND UPPER VOLTA'S BORDERS. HAVING BEEN DEEPLY HUMILIATED BY MALI'S MILITARY SUPERIORITY, VOLTANS FEEL THAT THERE IS A POINT WHERE IT DOES NOT PAY TO BE THE GOOD GUY WHO CONCENTRATES ALL HIS EFFORTS ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. WE DO EXPECT THAT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS WILL CONTINUE BUT IT IS LIKELY THAT, IN FUTURE, THESE EFFORTS WILL SHARE PRIORITY WITH THE STRENGTHENING OF THE ARMED FORCES.

GRAHAM

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